**The Monthly Newsletter of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**Lindy, Nebraska**

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**The Rod and Staff**



**October 2016**

**Women as Pastors**

*[Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.* – Acts 18:26 ESV

A few weeks ago, one of the readings from the Bible on Sunday morning was from the New Testament letter of 1 Timothy, chapter two. This chapter contains the famous (or infamous) verse about women “not teaching or having authority over a man.” Over the years and to this day, this verse, among a few others, has been used by various church bodies to prohibit women from serving in the office of pastor.

I bring this issue up not because there have been any concerns or questions that have been raised in our congregation about the issue, but simply because it is an issue that often comes up in conversations with Christians from other types of churches and even with other Lutheran denominations. Recognizing that an entire book could be written about this issue (and there are books that have been written about it!), I will do my best to give a brief overview of the issue and explain why our organizations of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) consider that women can, along with men, serve in the office of pastor.

After the mergers that took place in 1960 and 1962, there were three major-sized Lutheran denominations in the United States along with a number of smaller ones. The Lutheran Church in America (LCA), which is the group that Good Shepherd was a member of, was formed from a merger of four groups of German, Swedish, Danish, and Finnish Lutherans and was concentrated mostly in the eastern part of the country. The American Lutheran Church (TALC) was formed from a merger of four different Danish, German, and Norwegian groups and was concentrated mostly in the upper Midwest. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) simply continued its independent existence that dated back to 1847.

In 1970, both the LCA and TALC voted at their national conventions to allow women to serve as pastors for congregations that chose to call them. The LCMS never did approve the practice, and it continues to allow only men to serve as pastors to this day. When the LCA and TALC merged in 1988 to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), there was no question as to whether the practice of ordaining women would continue.

When a group of congregations departed from the ELCA and decided to form Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) in 2001, some questioned why they did not simply join the Missouri Synod (LCMS). One of their reasons for not doing so was that they wanted an organization that affirmed the ability of women to serve as pastors. Similarly, when the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) was formed in 2010 by congregations that departed from the ELCA, they chose to continue the practice of having female pastors, stating in their constitution that “both men and women may serve in all offices of the church.”

Those who oppose the ordination of women as pastors typically point to the words of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, especially 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, where Paul speaks about women “being silent” and “not having authority over a man.” Those who oppose women being ordained interpret these passages as binding for all time. Those who favor the ordination of women interpret these verses in light of other parts of the Bible, where they see women serving in various leadership roles in the early Christian Church.

Consider, as one example, the verse that I listed at the top of this article. In Acts 18, it tells the story of a married couple, a woman named Priscilla (or Prisca in some places) and the man Aquila, who were associates of Paul. They were a missionary couple and are mentioned in various places in the New Testament, and Acts 18 reports that God used them to explain the way of God more accurately to the man named Apollos. If Paul’s words about a woman “not teaching or having authority over a man” in 1 Timothy were meant to apply to all situations, then how could Priscilla “teach the way of God more accurately” to the man Apollos? Others have noted that it is curious that Priscilla is often listed first, before her husband, leading some to believe that Priscilla was the chief teacher among the couple. In light of this, many interpret 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 as reflecting particular situations where certain women needed to be told to remain silent and learn in submission to men.

There are also a variety of other places where women are mentioned as important leaders in the early Christian Church. Consider the example of Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians 4. Paul writes that these women “labored side by side with me in the work of the gospel.” Since the work of the gospel includes preaching and teaching about Jesus Christ, one might assume that these women served in the role of teacher and preacher. Also note the reference in Romans 16 to Phoebe as a “deacon,” the only specific individual to hold that title in the New Testament. Perhaps most interesting is the reference in Romans 16:7 to a person named Junia (a female name) as being “among the apostles.” Some ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have the name in masculine form as “Junias,” but the majority of manuscripts speak of “Junia.” The term “apostle” was a title of high honor among early Christians, typically reserved for those who had witnessed Jesus raised from the dead and who were sent as messengers of the good news of Jesus Christ. Another interesting note is that there is some evidence that a woman named Theodora served in the office of bishop in Rome as late as the eighth century.

Perhaps most importantly, Lutherans have generally understood the office of pastor in a functional way. The purpose of the office of ministry is to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ through law and gospel. Because “faith comes through hearing the word of Christ” (Romans 10), the gender of the person speaking that word is not of ultimate concern.

Unfortunately, there are some who speak in favor of the ordination of women because of issues of “women’s rights.” The truth is that no one, woman or man, has a *right* to be ordained. The authority of the office of ministry comes from the call of the Christian community to serve them with the Word of God, not based on our understanding of “rights.”

In all likelihood, this issue is one that will never be completely resolved, and I do recognize that there are faithful Christians who believe that ordaining women is not faithful to the Scriptures and the Christian tradition. The NALC and LCMC will likely continue to allow women to be ordained, and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and other, smaller groups such as the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), and other micro synods will likely continue to prohibit it. Nevertheless, there are indications of a good, developing relationship between the NALC and the LCMS in spite of this disagreement, and many on both sides are encouraged by this in spite of disagreement on an issue such as the ordination of women. Though it is unlikely that the NALC and the LCMS will develop an official fellowship arrangement because of this and other issues, leaders on both sides recognize the importance of cooperating and being mutually supportive where and when they are able.

For those interested in exploring this topic in greater detail, you might want to read a paper written by the president of the Canadian Association of Lutheran Congregations (a smaller Canadian Lutheran group that is similar in perspective to both LCMC and the NALC). You can find that paper on the internet at the following address: http://www.calc.ca/Ordination%20of%20Women.pdf

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Commemoration of the Saints**

Lutherans do not venerate (pray to) special people called “saints.” Our Lutheran confessional documents speak against that practice. However, those same documents that prohibit the veneration of saints encourage Christian people to look to the lives of significant Christians of the past as a source of encouragement for our lives in the present.



For October of 2016, we remember the life of Francis of Assisi, an Italian friar and preacher who lived from 1181-1226. The current Pope of the Roman Catholic Church took his papal name from this man and is known as “Pope Francis.” He was born into a wealthy family, but he came to reject wealth as a means to obtaining happiness. He and his followers lived a simple life of poverty.

Francis of Assisi is one of the most famous figures in world history, commonly referred to as “Saint Francis” even by those who are not members of the Roman Catholic Church or even Christian at all. His full significance cannot be encapsulated in a brief paragraph. At a time when the church hierarchy in Rome was focused on temporal power and was corrupt, in need of reform, Francis advocated for a simpler message: “To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps.” He encouraged respect for all of creation, including animals. He also sought to reach out to Muslims with the good news of Jesus Christ.

*Most high, good Lord, grant your people grace gladly to renounce the vanities of this world, that following the way of blessed Francis, we may for love of you delight in your whole creation with perfect joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

* Pr. T. E. Jacobson

**Featured Hymn for October**

***Sing to the Lord of Harvest***

*Lutheran Hymnal for Church and Home, 262*

1. Sing to the Lord of harvest, sing songs of love and praise; with joyful hearts and voices your alleluias raise. By him the rolling seasons in fruitful order move; sing to the Lord of harvest a joyous song of love.
2. God makes the clouds drop fatness, the deserts bloom and spring, the hills leap up in gladness, the valleys laugh and sing. God fills them with his fullness, all things with large increase; he crowns the year with goodness, with plenty and with peace.
3. Bring to this sacred altar the gifts his goodness gave, the golden sheaves of harvest, the souls Christ died to save. Your hearts lay down before him when at his feet you fall, and with your lives adore him who gave his life for all.

* John S. B. Monsell, 1811-1875

*Note: In a time when the rural population was numerically stronger, hymns of planting and harvest took a larger place in the hymnals than today. This hymn by Monsell appeared first in the second edition of Monsell’s* Hymns of Love and Praise*, 1866.*

**Monthly Watchword for October**

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

* 2 Corinthians 3:17 ESV

**Ushers for October:**

* Head Usher:
  + Travis Kauth, Shauna Kauth
* Ushers:
  + Dennis and Dixie Stewart
  + Nolan Poppe
  + Regg Eckmann
  + Kathy Koops
  + Teri Edwards

**For Further Information on LCMC and the NALC:** You can download and read the newsletters of both organizations at the following addresses:

* **http://www.lcmc.net/newsletters**
* **http://thenalc.org/newsletter/**

**Website:** The web address is as follows:

* **www.gselclindy.weebly.com**

**Soup and Pie:** Will be on Wednesday, October 5 at the Bloomfield community center. Lunch and dinner will be served.

**Bright Horizons Donations:** For October, the congregation will be collecting donations for the Bright Horizons shelter in Norfolk. Boxes are in the entryway of the church. Thank you for contributing to this cause, a small way of “letting your light shine” (Matthew 5)!

**From Martin Luther’s Small Catechism:**

**The Lord’s Prayer: The Seventh Petition**

***But deliver us from evil.***

*What does this mean?*

*We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our heavenly Father would deliver us from every type of evil, whether it affects our bodies or souls, property or reputation, and at last, when our hour of death comes, would grant us a blessed end to our earthly lives, and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.*

**October 2016**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|  |  |  |  |  |  | 1 |
| 2  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion at altar rail  Green | 3 | 4 | 5  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Soup and pie in Bloomfield.  No Confirmation Class: students assist with soup and pie | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9  Sunday school, 9:30  Worship, 10:30  Green | 10 | 11 | 12  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class, 5:00 PM  Church council, 7:00 PM | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30 with Holy Communion, continuous line  Green | 17 | 18 | 19  Pr. Tom in Lindy  WOW/WNALC meeting, 10:00 AM  Confirmation class, 5:00 PM | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30  Green | 24 | 25 | 26 27 28 29  Pr. Tom in Lindy  Confirmation class,  5:00 PM | | | |
| 30  Sunday School, 9:30  Worship, 10:30  Red | 31  Reformation Day |  |  | | | |

Good Shepherd Evangelical

Lutheran Church of Lindy

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